

NATO Summit to Discuss Ukraine's Membership Next Month. Nuland Accompanies Blinken to Kiev.

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The president of Ukraine met with the presidents of NATO members Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in the latter's capital, Warsaw, on May 3 [to solidify cooperation against their common adversaries: Russia and Belarus](#). The five heads of state signed a joint declaration pledging multifaceted cooperation, including on security concerns.

Ukraine's four partners in the meeting are to the north of it, are on the Baltic Sea and border Russia, its external territory of Kaliningrad and Belarus, Russia's Union State partner. In fact two of them surround Kaliningrad on the land side, two border Russia proper and three border Belarus. All four nations host NATO Battlegroups and U.S. armed forces assigned to the Pentagon's Operation Atlantic Resolve.

[An analysis by Mehmet Kanci](#) appeared on the website of Turkey's *Anadolu Agency* recently, an excerpt from which is worth quoting *in extenso*:

"In September 2016, General John Abizaid, who had retired as the commander of the US Central Forces (CENTCOM) in 2007, was appointed by then-US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to advise then-Ukraine Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak. Until Abizaid was appointed as Ambassador to Riyadh in November 2018, he worked systematically to bring the Ukrainian army up to NATO standards. During this time, the US provided the Ukrainian army with communication systems, Javelin anti-tank missiles, and armored vehicles. Although Ukraine is not officially a NATO country, it has attained NATO standards in the last five years thanks to support from Turkey, the US, the UK, and Poland. Ukraine enacted a strategy document in March to reclaim its occupied territories after realizing it had completed its military preparations."

The above, the author added, accounts for Ukraine's increasingly assertive if not abrasive approach toward the Donetsk and Lugansk republics in the Donbass and toward Russia in recent months.

The unanimity and rapidity with which the U.S., NATO and the European Union fell into line with that new confrontational approach establishes without doubt the coordinated plan the parties had agreed on.

A statement by Polish President Andrzej Duda below hints at what may well be the larger plan. Should Ukraine with American and NATO support launch a full-scale offensive in the Donbass, diversionary actions by the four Baltic NATO members could target Belarus and Kaliningrad to throw Russia off balance.

After yesterday's meeting in Warsaw, Polish President Duda stated, "[At the NATO summit in June, it is planned to discuss a road map for Ukraine to take steps to join NATO.](#)"

He is quoted by *UKRINFORM* as follows:

"We also discussed [with the president of Ukraine] the upcoming NATO summit to be held in Brussels in mid-June....[The summit participants will discuss a formal definition of the path which Ukraine should follow towards membership in the North Atlantic Alliance....](#)"

Duda also affirmed that Ukraine's conflict with Russia was "a fundamental cause" for not only Kiev but for "other friends from this part of Europe."

[Interfax-Ukraine reminded its readers](#) that at a briefing on April 16 after meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Ukraine's Zelensky expected "to hear support for the provision of the Membership Action Plan at the NATO summit."

He further elaborated:

"As for France and President Macron, we feel Ukraine's support in the MAP issue. I would like to hear the specifics of when it can be, but it depends not only on France....There will be a NATO summit in June, and we will definitely hear if there is such a signal, and from which specific countries do we hear support on the MAP issue."

In addition to securing the pledges of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, and of France and Germany, to support Ukraine in any future war in the Donbass and with Russia, [Zelensky also garnered clear support from Turkey](#) to the same effect.

In Warsaw yesterday the Polish president also spoke of a meeting a week from now of the Bucharest Nine (Eastern European NATO member states Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), emphasizing,

"I think that Ukraine and Belarus will be very important topics, especially Ukraine and the Russian presence near the borders of Ukraine."

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To add the final touch to plans for a united front against Russia and Belarus, it was announced that on his visit to Kiev starting today Secretary of State Antony Blinken is accompanied by his [recently-confirmed Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland](#), arguably the main architect of the 2014 violent overthrow of the government of President Viktor Yanukovich, which resulted in the military assault against the Donbass and the current showdown with Russia. One can't help be reminded of the proverb that the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime.

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